

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT  
U.S. Appln. No. 10/718,694  
Attorney Docket No.: Q78578

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

**Please replace the first full paragraph on page 3 with the following new paragraph:**

It is desirable that the positions of structural components within images are positionally aligned so that they correspond between images which are to become objects of comparative viewing. This is because the positions of the structural components differ between images, due to changes in the posture of a subject, a difference in an imaging apparatus, and the like. As an example of this positional alignment, a two step process is known (refer to ~~Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication No. 8(1996) 335721~~ United States Patent Publication No. 20030016853). The two step process involves a first positional alignment operation and a second positional alignment operation. The first positional alignment operation is a global transform (for example, Affine Transform) accomplished by parallel movement, rotation, magnification and reduction of the two images. The second positional alignment operation first divides the images into a plurality of local regions following the first positional alignment operation. Then, the images which have been matched in the corresponding local regions are subjected to nonlinear distortion transform (warping) by curve fitting (for example, a two dimensional tenth degree polynomial).